

REBECCA WHITE MP

FEDERAL MEMBER FOR LYONS

Murray Harper
Acting President
Tasmanian Association of State Superannuants

Via email: mlharper@bigpond.net.au

Dear Murray

Thank you for your letter and submission on behalf of the Tasmanian Association of State Superannuants in relation to the Health Legislation Amendment (Improving Choice and Transparency for Private Health Consumers) Bill 2026.

Thank you for writing to me and for sharing your views. The Commonwealth Government recognises that many older Australians have maintained private health insurance over long periods, often at considerable personal cost, and that there are genuine concerns about affordability, access to timely health care, pressure on the public system and confidence that adequate aged care support will be available when needed.

In this Budget, changes are being made to the Private Health Insurance rebate to support aged care. The Government will continue to provide private health rebates of between 8% and 24% based on a person's income, rather than their age. The Government can guarantee that the savings from these changes will be directed to fund more services in aged care.

The Government is also mindful of concerns about potential flow-on effects for the private health system and public hospitals, and about the need for people to plan ahead. For this reason, adequate time has been provided for adjustment. The changes will apply from 1 April 2027, lining up with the start of the private health insurance premium year. Any changes to the cost of private health insurance will not take effect until April next year. Minister will be watching closely to ensure private health funds do not raise their prices excessively. The sector will be able to factor in necessary adjustments in their 2027 premium round applications, and consumers will have time to compare insurer offers before April 2027 premium changes take effect.

I have also spoken with private health insurers to ask whether they could consider reducing the premiums they charge for older Australians, in recognition of the years of loyalty many people have given to private health insurance companies. This is a

good opportunity for insurers to recognise their most loyal customers by choosing to keep premiums to a minimum, and I hope that is an option they take up.

The Government has also made significant investments in the health care system by increasing access to bulk billing GPs, with the electorate of Lyons already benefitting from a tripling in the number of bulk billing practices. There have been eight Medicare Urgent Care Clinics open in Tasmania, including two in Lyons, along with freezing the price of medicines on the PBS at \$7.70 for concession card holders. These improvements in access to care along with a record uplift in funding for state hospital services will provide greater access to affordable health care for all Tasmanians, including those who maintain private health insurance.

These reforms seek to balance fairness, sustainability, and the growing demand for aged care, while recognising the diversity of individual circumstances and allowing time for the health sector and consumers to adapt.

Your submission on behalf of T.A.S.S. will be considered by the committee as the Parliament continues to consider this legislation.

Thanks again for getting in touch.

Kind regards



The Hon. Rebecca White MP
Federal Labor Member for Lyons

18 August 2026 | JB